

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-12 (canceled).

13. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 49, wherein the light quantity control member consists of an electrooptical element.

14. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 49, wherein the light quantity control member is an aperture member that controls an aperture caliber to control the subject light passing through the image taking lens.

15. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 13, wherein the light quantity control member is an aperture member that controls an aperture caliber to control the subject light passing through the image taking lens.

16. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 49, wherein the light quantity control member is a shutter member that controls a shutter speed to control the subject light passing through the image taking lens.

17. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 13, wherein the light quantity control member is a shutter member that controls a shutter speed to control the subject light passing through the image taking lens.

18. (previously presented): A digital camera that creates an image signal through catching a subject light, the digital camera comprising:

an image taking lens, which is variable in a focal length, comprising three groups of a first lens group, a second lens group, and a third lens group in the named order with respect to an optical axis direction;

a lens barrel that incorporates therein the image taking lens, having in front an aperture through which the image taking lens appears and having in rear an internal space defined by a wall, the lens barrel being free in extension and collapse and performing a focal length control; and

a solid state imaging device that receives the subject light formed by the image taking lens to create the image signal, the solid state imaging device being supported by the wall,

wherein the lens barrel has a second lens group guide frame that moves in the optical axis direction in accordance with the extension and the collapse so as to determine a position related to the optical axis direction of the second lens group, and a second lens group holding frame that holds the second lens group and is pivotally supported by the second lens group guide frame, the second lens group holding frame causing the second lens group to revolve on the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension, and the second lens group holding frame causing the second lens group to revolve on a saving position out of the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the collapse;

wherein the second lens group holding frame is enabled in a direction that the second lens group is revolved on the optical axis,

the lens barrel has a cylinder that rotatably moves in accordance with the extension and the collapse, and the cylinder has a revolving affecting section being in contact with the second

lens group holding frame by a rotatable movement of the cylinder at the time of the collapse to affect revolving of the second lens group holding frame, and

the second lens group holding frame has an affect receiving section that is pushed by the revolving affecting section at the time of the collapse so that the second lens group revolves into the saving position.

19 - 23 (Cancel)

24. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 18, wherein the second lens group holding frame causes the second lens group to advance onto the optical axis of the image taking lens, at the time of the extension, in such a manner that the second lens group holding frame is released from urging of the revolving affecting section.

25. (currently amended): A digital camera according to claim 18, wherein the revolving affecting section has a projection provided at the rear end of the cylinder with respect to the optical axis direction, and

the affect receiving section causes the second lens group to be saved from the optical axis of the image taking lens to the saving position through revolving by means of pushing by the ~~the~~a taper of the revolving affecting section, at the time of the collapse.

26. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 38, wherein the digital camera further comprises a driving source that rotatably moves the second lens group holding frame so that the second lens group revolves.

27. (original): A digital camera according to claim 26, wherein the driving source is a motor, and

the second lens group holding frame has a gear for transmitting a driving force from the motor.

28. (previously presented): A digital camera that creates an image signal through catching a subject light, the digital camera comprising:

an image taking lens, which is variable in a focal length, comprising three groups of a front elements lens, a rear elements lens, and a focus lens in the named order with respect to an optical axis direction, wherein a focusing is performed by a movement of the focus lens;

a lens barrel that incorporates therein the image taking lens, having in front an aperture through which the image taking lens appears and having in rear an internal space defined by a wall, the lens barrel being free in extension and collapse and performing a focal length control; and

a solid state imaging device that receives the subject light formed by the image taking lens to create the image signal, the solid state imaging device being disposed at a position projecting from the wall to the internal space and being supported by the wall,

wherein the lens barrel has a lens advancing and saving mechanism in which at the time of the collapse of the lens barrel, the rear elements lens is saved to a hollow portion divided by the solid state imaging device and the wall beside the solid state imaging device, the hollow portion being formed by the fact that the solid state imaging device is disposed at the position

projecting from the wall, and at the time of the extension of the lens barrel, the rear elements lens is advanced onto an optical axis of the image taking lens;

wherein the lens barrel has a rear elements guide frame that moves in the optical axis direction in accordance with the extension, the collapse and the focal length control so as to determine a position related to the optical axis direction of the rear elements lens, and a rear elements holding frame that holds the rear elements lens and is pivotally supported by the rear elements guide frame, the rear elements holding frame causing the rear elements lens to revolve on the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension, and the rear elements holding frame causing the rear elements lens to revolve on the hollow portion at the time of the collapse;

wherein the rear elements holding frame is enabled in a direction that the rear elements lens is revolved on the optical axis,

the lens barrel has a cylinder that rotatably moves in accordance with the extension, the collapse and the focal length control, and the cylinder has a revolving affecting section being in contact with the rear elements holding frame by a rotatable movement of the cylinder at the time of the collapse to affect revolving of the rear elements holding frame, and

the rear elements holding frame has an affect receiving section that is pushed by the revolving affecting section at the time of the collapse so that the rear elements lens revolves into the hollow portion.

29-31 (Cancel)

32. (currently amended): A digital camera that creates an image signal through catching a subject light, the digital camera comprising:

an image taking lens, which is variable in a focal length, comprising three groups of a front elements lens, a rear elements lens, and a focus lens in the named order with respect to an optical axis direction, wherein a focusing is performed by a movement of the focus lens;

a lens barrel that incorporates therein the image taking lens, having in front an aperture through which the image taking lens appears and having in rear an internal space defined by a wall, the lens barrel being free in extension and collapse and performing a focal length control; and

a solid state imaging device that receives the subject light formed by the image taking lens to create the image signal, the solid state imaging device being disposed at a position projecting from the wall to the internal space and being supported by the wall,

wherein the lens barrel has a lens advancing and saving mechanism in which at the time of the collapse of the lens barrel, the rear elements lens is saved to a hollow portion divided by the solid state imaging device and the wall beside the solid state imaging device, the hollow portion being formed by the fact that the solid state imaging device is disposed at the position projecting from the wall, and at the time of the extension of the lens barrel, the rear elements lens is advanced onto an optical axis of the image taking lens;

wherein the lens barrel has a rear elements guide frame that moves in the optical axis direction in accordance with the extension, the collapse and the focal length control so as to determine a position related to the optical axis direction of the rear elements lens, and a rear elements holding frame that holds the rear elements lens and is pivotally supported by the rear elements guide frame, the rear elements holding frame causing the rear elements lens to revolve

on the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension, and the rear elements holding frame causing the rear elements lens to revolve on the hollow portion at the time of the collapse; and

wherein the digital camera further comprises:

a driving source that rotatably moves the rear elements holding frame so that the rear elements lens revolves;

a driving gear fixed on a rotary shaft of the driving source;

a transmission gear connected to the driving gear; and

a receiving gear fixed on the rear elements holding frame and connected to the transmission gear,

wherein a rotary driving force of the driving source is transmitted via the driving gear, the transmission gear and the receiving gear to the rear elements holding frame.

33. (original): A digital camera according to claim 28, wherein the digital camera further comprises a light quantity control member that moves in one united body together with the rear elements lens in the optical axis direction of the image taking lens stored in the lens barrel to control a light quantity of the subject light passing through the image taking lens, and

the lens advancing and saving mechanism provides such a performance that at the time of the collapse of the lens barrel, the light quantity control member is saved together with the rear elements lens to the hollow portion, and at the time of the extension of the lens barrel, the light quantity control member is advanced together with the rear elements lens onto the optical axis of the image taking lens.

34. (previously presented): A digital camera that creates an image signal through catching a subject light, the digital camera comprising:

an image taking lens, which is variable in a focal length, comprising three groups of a front elements lens, a rear elements lens, and a focus lens in the named order with respect to an optical axis direction, wherein a focusing is performed by a movement of the focus lens;

a lens barrel that incorporates therein the image taking lens, having in front an aperture through which the image taking lens appears and having in rear an internal space defined by a wall, the lens barrel being free in extension and collapse and performing a focal length control; and

a solid state imaging device that receives the subject light formed by the image taking lens to create the image signal, the solid state imaging device being supported by the wall,

wherein the lens barrel has a rear elements guide frame that moves in the optical axis direction in accordance with the extension, the collapse and the focal length control so as to determine a position related to the optical axis direction of the rear elements lens, and a rear elements holding frame that holds the rear elements lens and is pivotally supported by the rear elements guide frame, the rear elements holding frame causing the rear elements lens to revolve on the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension, and the rear elements holding frame causing the rear elements lens to revolve on a saving position out of the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the collapse;

wherein the rear elements holding frame is enabled in a direction that the rear elements lens is revolved on the optical axis,

the lens barrel has a cylinder that rotatably moves in accordance with the extension, the collapse and the focal length control, and the cylinder has a revolving affecting section being in

contact with the rear elements holding frame by a rotatable movement of the cylinder at the time of the collapse to affect revolving of the rear elements holding frame, and

the rear elements holding frame has an affect receiving section that is pushed by the revolving affecting section at the time of the collapse so that the rear elements lens revolves into the hollow portion.

35-36 (Cancel)

37. (currently amended): A digital camera that creates an image signal through catching a subject light, the digital camera comprising:

an image taking lens, which is variable in a focal length, comprising three groups of a front elements lens, a rear elements lens, and a focus lens in the named order with respect to an optical axis direction, wherein a focusing is performed by a movement of the focus lens;

a lens barrel that incorporates therein the image taking lens, having in front an aperture through which the image taking lens appears and having in rear an internal space defined by a wall, the lens barrel being free in extension and collapse and performing a focal length control; and

a solid state imaging device that receives the subject light formed by the image taking lens to create the image signal, the solid state imaging device being supported by the wall,

wherein the lens barrel has a rear elements guide frame that moves in the optical axis direction in accordance with the extension, the collapse and the focal length control so as to determine a position related to the optical axis direction of the rear elements lens, and a rear elements holding frame that holds the rear elements lens and is pivotally supported by the rear

elements guide frame, the rear elements holding frame causing the rear elements lens to revolve on the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension, and the rear elements holding frame causing the rear elements lens to revolve on a saving position out of the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the collapse

wherein the digital camera further comprises:

a driving source that rotatably moves the rear elements holding frame so that the rear elements lens revolves;

a driving gear fixed on a rotary shaft of the driving source;

a transmission gear connected to the driving gear; and

a receiving gear fixed on the rear elements holding frame and connected to the transmission gear,

wherein a rotary driving force of the driving source is transmitted via the driving gear, the transmission gear and the receiving gear to the rear elements holding frame.

38. (previously presented): A digital camera that creates an image signal through catching a subject light, the digital camera comprising:

a lens barrel that incorporates therein an image taking lens, which is variable in a focal length, comprising three groups of a first lens group, a second lens group, and a third lens group in the named order with respect to an optical axis direction, the lens barrel being free in extension and collapse and performing a focal length control,

wherein the lens barrel has:

a cylinder that rotatably moves in accordance with the extension and the collapse;

a second lens group guide frame that moves in the optical axis direction in accordance with the extension and the collapse so as to determine a position related to the optical axis direction of the second lens group; and

a second lens group holding frame that holds the second lens group and is pivotally supported by the second lens group guide frame, the second lens group holding frame causing the second lens group to advance onto the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension, and the second lens group holding frame causing the second lens group to be saved to a saving position out of the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the collapse,

wherein the cylinder has a revolving affecting section being in contact with the second lens group guide frame by a rotatable movement of the cylinder at the time of the collapse to affect revolving of the second lens group holding frame, and

wherein the second lens group holding frame has an affect receiving section that is affected by the revolving affecting section at the time of the collapse so that the second lens group revolves into the saving position.

39. (currently amended): A digital camera according to claim 38, wherein the second lens group holding frame causes the second lens ~~group~~ group to advance onto the optical axis of the image taking lens, at the time of the extension, in such a manner that the second lens group holding frame is released from affection of the revolving affecting section.

40. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 39, wherein the revolving affecting section is a projection provided at the rear end of the cylinder with respect to the optical axis direction,

wherein the affect receiving section causes the second lens group to be saved from the optical axis of the image taking lens to the saving position through revolving by means of pushing by a side of the projection that rotatably moves, at the time of the collapse.

41. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 38, wherein the digital camera further comprises a light quantity control member that moves in one united body together with the second lens group in the optical axis direction of the image taking lens to control a light quantity of the subject light passing through the image taking lens, and wherein the light quantity control member is advanced onto the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension and the light quantity control member is saved to the saving position at the time of the collapse, together with the second lens group.

42. (currently amended): A digital camera that creates an image signal through catching a subject light, the digital camera comprising:

a lens barrel that incorporates therein an image taking lens, which is variable in a focal length, comprising three groups of a first lens group, a second lens group, and a third lens group in the named order with respect to an optical axis direction, the lens barrel being free in extension and collapse and performing a focal length control,

wherein the lens barrel has:

a second lens group guide frame that moves in the optical axis direction in accordance with the extension and the collapse so as to determine a position related to the optical axis direction of the second lens group; and

a second lens group holding frame that holds the second lens group and is pivotally supported by the second lens group guide frame, the second lens group holding frame causing the second lens group to advance onto the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension, and the second lens group holding frame causing the second lens group to be saved to a saving position out of the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the collapse; and

a driving source that rotatably moves the second lens group holding frame so that the second lens group is advanced onto the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension and the second lens group is saved to a saving position at the time of the collapse;

a driving gear fixed on a rotary shaft of the driving source;

a transmission gear connected to the driving gear; and

a receiving gear fixed on the second lens group holding frame and connected to the transmission gear,

wherein a rotary driving force of the driving source is transmitted via the driving gear, the transmission gear and the receiving gear to the second lens group holding frame~~wherein the driving source produces a rotary driving force.~~

43. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 42, wherein the digital camera further comprises a light quantity control member that moves in one united body together with the second lens group in the optical axis direction of the image taking lens to control a light quantity of the subject light passing through the image taking lens, and wherein the light quantity control member is advanced onto the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension and the light quantity control member is saved to the saving position at the time of the collapse, together with the second lens group.

44. (previously presented): A lens barrel that incorporates therein an image taking lens, which is variable in a focal length, comprising three groups of a first lens group, a second lens group, and a third lens group in the named order with respect to an optical axis direction, the lens barrel being free in extension and collapse and performing a focal length control, the lens barrel comprising:

a cylinder that rotatably moves in accordance with the extension and the collapse;

a second lens group guide frame that moves in the optical axis direction in accordance with the extension and the collapse so as to determine a position related to the optical axis direction of the second lens group; and

a second lens group holding frame that holds the second lens group and is pivotally supported by the second lens group guide frame, the second lens group holding frame causing the second lens group to advance onto the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension, and the second lens group holding frame causing the second lens group to be saved to a saving position out of the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the collapse,

wherein the cylinder has a revolving affecting section being in contact with the second lens group guide frame by a rotatable movement of the cylinder at the time of the collapse to affect revolving of the second lens group holding frame, and

wherein the second lens group holding frame has an affect receiving section that is affected by the revolving affecting section at the time of the collapse so that the second lens group revolves into the saving position.

45. (previously presented): A lens barrel according to claim 44, wherein the second lens group holding frame causes the second lens group to advance onto the optical axis of the image taking lens, at the time of the extension, in such a manner that the second lens group holding frame is released from affection of the revolving affecting section.

46. (previously presented): A lens barrel according to claim 45, wherein the revolving affecting section is a projection provided at the rear end of the cylinder with respect to the optical axis direction,

wherein the affect receiving section causes the second lens group to be saved from the optical axis of the image taking lens to the saving position through revolving by means of pushing by a side of the projection that rotatably moves, at the time of the collapse.

47. (previously presented): A lens barrel according to claim 44, wherein the lens barrel further comprises a light quantity control member that moves in one united body together with the second lens group in the optical axis direction of the image taking lens to control a light quantity of the subject light passing through the image taking lens, and wherein the light quantity control member is advanced onto the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension and the light quantity control member is saved to the saving position at the time of the collapse, together with the second lens group.

48. (currently amended): A lens barrel that incorporates therein an image taking lens, which is variable in a focal length, comprising three groups of a first lens group, a second lens group, and a third lens group in the named order with respect to an optical axis direction, the lens barrel being free in extension and collapse and performing a focal length control, the lens barrel comprising:

a second lens group guide frame that moves in the optical axis direction in accordance with the extension and the collapse so as to determine a position related to the optical axis direction of the second lens group; and

a second lens group holding frame that holds the second lens group and is pivotally supported by the second lens group guide frame, the second lens group holding frame causing the second lens group to advance onto the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension, and the second lens group holding frame causing the second lens group to be saved to a saving position out of the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the collapse; and

a driving source that rotatably moves the second lens group holding frame so that the second lens group is advanced onto the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension and the second lens group is saved to a saving position at the time of the collapse;

a driving gear fixed on a rotary shaft of the driving source;

a transmission gear connected to the driving gear; and

a receiving gear fixed on the second lens group holding frame and connected to the transmission gear,

wherein a rotary driving force of the driving source is transmitted via the driving gear, the transmission gear and the receiving gear to the second lens group holding frame~~wherein the driving source produces a rotary driving force.~~

49. (previously presented): A lens barrel according to claim 48, wherein the lens barrel further comprises a light quantity control member that moves in one united body together with the second lens group in the optical axis direction of the image taking lens to control a light quantity of the subject light passing through the image taking lens, and wherein the light quantity control member is advanced onto the optical axis of the image taking lens at the time of the extension and the light quantity control member is saved to the saving position at the time of the collapse, together with the second lens group.

50. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 18, wherein the cylinder comprises a cam groove for guiding the second lens group guide frame.

51. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 50, wherein the cam groove is formed on an inner wall of the cylinder.

52. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 50, wherein the cam groove is engaged with a cam pin fixed on the second lens group guide frame.

53. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 18, wherein the revolving affecting section comprises a convex portion on a rear edge of the cylinder.

54. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 53, wherein the affect receiving section comprises a lever member pivotally supported by a rotary shaft so as to be rotatably movable with respect to the second lens group guide frame.

55. (previously presented): A digital camera according to claim 54, wherein at the time of the collapse a sidewall of the convex portion of the cylinder hits an edge of the lever member, so that the lever member rotatably moves the second lens group into the saving position.